

Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (I O) Meeting Minutes 10/30/19

Attendance: Tee Ann Hunter, T Ithaca; Liz Cameron, Tompkins County; Lynn Leopold, V Lansing; Bob Barton, T Hector; C.J. Randall, T Lansing; Deborah Dawson, Tompkins County; Ronny Hardaway, V Lansing; Mike Solvig, T Ithaca; Liz Thomas, T Ulysses; Roxy Johnston, C Ithaca; Darby Kiley, Tompkins County; Jennifer Karius, Project Coordinator; Jackie Cassaniti, T Caroline;.....AND on ZOOM, Ona Ferguson, Consensus Building Institute; Hilary Lambert, CLWN; Grace Bates, V Aurora; Tom Vawter, T Lansing; Rod Howe, T Ithaca

*****Our next meeting will be on December 4th, 2019, at the Ithaca Town Hall at 7pm for November and December*****

The first part of the meeting was about how to reorganize the I O, Roxy gave a short history of the I O to Ona Ferguson, senior mediator from the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) a non-profit, on ZOOM. CBI helped with the HAB's action plan and the Owasco Lake Watershed reorganization. Now the I O is wondering if they would be the right fit for our reorganization needs. Tee Ann, Roxy, Hilary and others talked to Ona about making a presentation at the I O meeting. There were 3 main assessments to the plan suggested by Ona: 1. process planning and design, four parts, 2. Information gathering and analysis, seven parts, 3. Strategic direction development, six parts, the total charge would be \$19, 857.50. If this is accepted by the I O members, the I O would look for a new grant to cover this cost, not from the DOS grant that Kathy Bertuch (CNYRPDB) is helping the I O get and prioritize projects. (Katherine Bertuch is on leave for health reasons so Tee Ann would like the DOS grant put on hold until she returns, and give some info to the munis.)

As Tee Ann said, the I O is charged by NYS to take care of Cayuga Lake. Numerous comments and questions were directed to Ona....There was a time Cayuga Lake was one of the only Finger Lakes without a lake organization, it seems the I O got bogged down. Would this plan allow us to measure our success? Who would administer this reorganization? Would this help us rewrite the bylaws? How would a central person keep tabs on what everyone is doing? (Kate Hackett used to do this, but it was only a snapshot, and not that helpful.) The I O seems to be representing only some of the municipalities (munis) around the lake (24 out of the 43 munis, mostly the southern end of Cayuga Lake). How does the I O get people to work together (there are non-synchronized governments)? How do we expand our sway over the whole watershed? Could we use the Owasco Watershed rules and regs? We should share grant writing and not have duplication of efforts and limited resources. Ona suggested that to get more munis on board, the I O needs to talk to all of them (this has been tried before) and, she said, the I O needs to agree on priorities; ex. communication, suggest grants, lead focus groups. This was the end of the ZOOM session.

Tee Ann wanted to know what was going on in Hector, Bob said Hector is invested in the Seneca Lake watershed organization which just hired a watershed manager about 6 weeks ago, using a 3 year DOS grant (25%) and help from companies like Corning Inc. The DOS grant will help with a number of projects. This is good for Seneca and Keuka (which flows into Seneca Lake) Lakes, but as Roxy and Darby said, how do you keep these projects going after the grants end? The Seneca Lake organization meets quarterly and uses the Keuka Lake structure, the Town of Geneva is the leader, from the Finger Lakes Institute. Liz T. asked who applied for the grant, it was Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association, the Seneca Watershed I O lead by Mark Venuti; and State Senator Pam Helming helped. Bob suggested that the I O

try to get all the munis to sign an MOU. Tee Ann asked if that would obligate the munis to pay dues. How does the I O attract the small munis without giving them the burden of paying \$900?

Another watershed management tool is the 9-element plan from the DEC. Tee Ann talked to Tony Prestigiacomo about it. Roxy said the I O may not need it because the DEC can stay engaged as a partner to see action items through. The TMDL for Cayuga Lake should be coming out soon. C.J. said the 9-element plan application is a lot of work. She added, the I O should help make the acronyms understandable to all the munis. Also, which organizations hand out which rules and regs? There is structure and encouragement through the DEC as a supportive state organization and the EPA as a generator for federal funds. The EPA and the DEC both talk about TMDL plans for Cayuga Lake. Deborah asked if the 9-element plan could be substituted for a TMDL plan (no). She added that Eric Siy, the Fund for Lake George director wants to create Lake George and Chautauqua Lake watershed districts, which is opposed by many because not all lake associations have a lot of money (How can all these areas have taxing districts?). Liz T. said in Trumansburg there are 3 DEC grants going and the Finger Lakes Hub has helped to write the TMDL regs. Liz C. said she, as well as Roxy and Tee Ann, met with Mike Young from Bolton Point and other water purveyors and that there is a need for a source water assessment plan and a well-head protection plan for small communities, laying the groundwork for watershed rules and regs. And Katherine Hogel, from the DOS, is listening to all the talk about Cayuga Lake, as well as Chris Bordlemay from the Cornell water system and Ashley Inserillo from the NYS Dep't of Health, Bureau of Water Supply Protection. Tee Ann said the biggest challenge for the I O is getting a central focus. Should the I O have a subcommittee to work on that?

Tee Ann said the I O should connect with the Finger Lakes Land Trust as they are starting a project to help protect the Finger Lakes. Darby and Jon Negley had a presentation on _____. Again, Tee Ann said: How do we prioritize? How do we organize? What is needed? How do we implement grants? Who wants to hold the grants? Does the I O need a watershed manager? It was said the county should not hold the grant because the process is hard to get it done. Could the city do it? Ask Cynthia Brock. Mike said that whoever holds the grant doesn't have to do the work. Is there grant money available?...go through an RFQ process? Darby and C.J. could help write a grant to the Park Foundation, the deadline is 1/10/20. Other ideas were TCCOG has money for water projects, Grace may have connections in Auburn. Mike suggested the I O needs to take little bites instead of all the things the I O is planning.

The September financial report stated that the I O has \$57,956.49; and the September minutes were approved. Submitted by Jackie Cassaniti